

Day of the Dead

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"Gosh, I'm tired," Ron yawned. "Good thing I can sleep now."

"Ron, we're in class!"

"Oh, come of it Hermione! Nobody does anything except sleep in History of Magic!"

"Still, you should pay attention. There might be something interesting. What is it, Harry?" For Harry was staring at a piece of parchment.

"It says, _Remember the Day of the Dead_," Harry read. Ron shivered. "What is that, Ron?"

"I have no idea! I've never heard of it! But it sounds bad to me."

"Ron, you're paranoid," Hermione sniffed in disgust.

"I am not! Well, I should be after all we've been through! Day of the Dead sounds bad."

"Hermione, haven't you ever read anything about it?" Harry looked at her expectantly.

"No, I haven't. Let's ask Professor Binns."

"In the middle of the lecture?"

"Why not, no one is listening. Professor Binns?"

"Yes, Miss Garner?"

"Granger. Do you know what the Day of the Dead is?"

"Day of the Dead, did you say?" He looked at her, ghostly eyes glowing. "The Day of the Dead. Where did you ever hear of that?"

"I'm not sure," Hermione fibbed.

"Well, the Day of the Dead occurs only rarely, when the full moon falls on the first day of winter. In fact, that would be tonight. Traditionally, wizards would write letters to departed loved ones, and ceremonially burn them at midnight. It was said that letters treated this way would be read by the dead. Although there is nothing that backs this up, there are a few who practice it even today."

"Thank you, Professor."

"Now, back to the Troll Conferences of 1254â€|."

Harry sat alone in the dark common room. It was ten thirty, and everyone else was in bed. Harry had been thinking about Professor Binns' words all day. He had decided that even if he wasn't really sure that he believed it, still, it couldn't hurt. He dipped his quill into his ink.

To Mom and Dad, he wrote. He stared at it. Perhaps that wasn't quite what he wanted to say. Well, he'd best think of what to put next. _I don't really know if you'll see this, but I thought that I'd like to say these things anyway._

_ I never had a chance to say goodbye to you, to tell you how much I loved you. I miss you every day of my life, and love you every time I see your faces in a photograph. I hope that you would be proud of what I do and who I am today, but I don't know that because Voldemort took from me the chance to know you._

_ Dad, I've met your friends, I've talked to people who knew you. I know that I would have liked to know you, and hear stories from you of the things you did._

_ Mom, you saved my life that night. I don't know much about you, but I wish that I had known you._

_ I love both of you, and I miss you. I hope that one day, I can see you._

He left the note unsigned, folded it up, and put it in his pocket. Then he put on his cloak and snuck unseen from the tower.

He'd decided to go to the top of the Astronomy tower to burn the letter. He thought that that way none of the smoke would be smelled, and there was an unthinking part of him that thought that there would be a better chance of it getting to his parents if he were outside and high up. He stood on the top of the tower and stared for a moment at the stars. Then he pulled his wand from his pocket. He held the letter for a moment more, and then put it on the battlement of the

tower. He pulled out his wand and touched it to the paper.

A bright flame appeared and ate the note. It seemed to take a long time to burn completely. As Harry was standing there, staring into the flames, he almost thought he could see tiny shapes in it, figures moving and dancing. Then, suddenly, there was nothing but ashes left. Harry blew once, and the ashes scattered down from the tower. He was just turning to go-

"I thought I might find you here, Harry." Albus Dumbledore was standing in the shadows. Harry realized that he'd pulled the cloak off of his head.

"Sir, I-"

"I know what you were doing," Dumbledore said, raising a hand to stop Harry's pleas. "The Day of the Dead is an intriguing idea, isn't it? That we can say goodbye to those that we didn't have a chance too? I know the appeal. But Harry, remember that all the letters in the world cannot bring back a dead loved one." He spoke sadly and gently.

"I know, sir. It's just that I miss them, and I never really knew them. Was I wrong to do that?"

"No, Harry, I don't think you were. I don't know that the dead can read our letters, but if they can, why not tell them of our love?" Dumbledore opened his hands, and Harry saw a fist full of ashes. Dumbledore scattered them to the wind. "You were not the only one to have that idea tonight, Harry," he said quietly. "But dwelling in the past is not a good idea. Why don't you run off to bed now?" Harry nodded and slipped off. He didn't stop until he was in his bed. Ron snored from the next bed over, and Neville whimpered in a dream. Harry slid beneath his covers and fell asleep.

High above the castle, Albus Dumbledore stood bathed in moonlight, his silver hair gleaming. The wind ruffled his beard, and he sighed. He should go in to bed too, he knew. But he remained there for a time longer, thinking, looking back over time and keeping company with the shades of the past, all his ghosts of memory and time.

This seems kind of weird to me, and maybe unfinished. It just popped into my head, almost fully formed, as I was reading 'The Grey King' by Susan Cooper. There's a line of a poem 'On the day of the dead when the year too dies' and I was thinking about the 'Day of the Dead' or Samhain, a Celtic tradition that differs in many ways from the wizard one that I described here. But this idea just, as I said, appeared. I think it's a bit strange and I am not sure whether I like it. It seems a bit sad to me, especially the end. How many people has Dumbledore lost?

** And they don't have to die for us to lose them. If there's someone you know and loves, make sure he or she knows it. It hurts too much to lose someone without them knowing that you love them.**

End
file.